BES Mastering Ecology Symposium
Ecology Careers Conference

Abstract Submission Guidance

We highly encourage all students attending the conference to present a recent piece of research they have been involved in, whether conducted as part of a degree program or independently through work/a work placement. The aim of the symposium is to provide an opportunity for students currently studying for, or who have recently completed a masters in ecology or related discipline to gain experience presenting their work at a national level conference. The symposium will take place on the second day of the Ecology Careers Conference (29 November).

Presentations will take one of three formats, a 10 minute talk, a 5 minute 'ignite' style talk or a poster presentation. All talks will be followed by 2 minutes of questions, and there will be several poster sessions throughout the day for poster discussions. The recommended format for ignite presentations consists of 20 slides, with each slide displayed for 20 seconds before automatically being advanced to the next. The aim of this format is to give an engaging overview of the key methods and results of a project.

The symposium will be divided into five themes. Please ensure you select the theme most appropriate (see next page) when submitting your abstract. All abstracts and information provided in the submission will be reviewed and ranked based on scientific excellence and the potential of the applicant. Please remember this is an event targeted at students about to begin, currently studying or recently graduated from masters in ecology and related fields. We therefore expect many students will be presenting final year undergraduate dissertations or masters projects and will take into account the level of the applicant when reviewing.

Please make sure you address the following points in your abstract:

- What ecology question does your project address?
- What were the most important methods used?
- What are your most interesting results?
- What is the relevance of your results beyond this project/study system?

On the day all presentations and presenters will be given individual feedback by a researcher working in a topic relevant to the theme. Prizes will be awarded for best talk, ignite talk and poster in each theme, as well as an overall best, voted for by the audience.

Please complete the abstract application form on the BES website. Submissions should be via email attachment with the subject line 'BES Symposium Abstract Submission' to karen@britishecologicalsociety.org by October 11 2013. All applicants will be notified by October 26 of the outcome of their submission.

Symposium Themes

The following five symposium themes are proposed. On abstract submission please ensure you select the theme most appropriate for your talk/poster.

1) **Global Change Biology: from individuals to ecosystems**

Biological responses to large global drivers of change at all ecological levels, from genetics to biomes, in terrestrial or aquatic systems. Studies assessing anthropogenic impacts on functions and services of ecological systems through field assessments or modelling. Insights from historical and palaeoecological (e.g. pollen, micro-fossils, animal remains, isotope analysis, geochemistry) records into long-term dynamics of ecosystems. Reconstruction of ecological baselines and restoration targets. Past ecological responses to environmental change, examining variability, thresholds and resilience.

2) **Biodiversity and Conservation**

Biodiversity conservation and natural resource management across biological, sociological and economic dimensions and all temporal or spatial scales. Systematic conservation planning and evidence based conservation. Functional and ecosystem service based approaches to conservation through to environmental decision making and policy engagement. Studies of biodiversity patterns and richness across different evolutionary, spatial and temporal scales including macroecological and macroevolutionary studies of biogeography or phylogeny.

3) **Ecological Interactions**

Ecological or evolutionary importance of interspecific interactions in a range of taxa (predator-prey, plant-herbivore, mutualisms, pollination, defence, etc), intraspecific interactions (communication, etc) or understanding the maintenance of ecological communities. Ecological interactions are increasingly underpinned by evolutionary thinking, whether in lab-based experiments using model organisms or studies of behaviour patterns.

4) **Ecological Applications**

Practical issues aiding environmental decision making across a wide spectrum of ecology such as agricultural biodiversity, pest management, fisheries management, food security, wildlife management, restoration etc.

5) **Stuff that didn't work but you think you know why!**

In research (including many masters or undergraduate projects) things don't quite work out as planned! This category provides an opportunity to present project work done that generated unexpected results- whether this be through discovering unexpected confounding factors or suggesting new hypotheses.